

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2016
IN CITY HALL

Mayor Michael C. Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Mark Carufel, City Clerk, gave the Invocation.

Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Joseph V. Romano, Maria G. Schmidt, Nate Shannon, Doug Skrzyniarz, Michael C. Taylor, and Barbara A. Ziarko.

Also Present: Mark D. Vanderpool, City Manager; Marc D. Kaszubski, Attorney; Mark Carufel, City Clerk; Carol Sobosky, Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Koski, seconded by Romano, to approve the Agenda as presented.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

REPORT FROM CITY MANAGER

Mr. Vanderpool reported that the Farmer's Market and the Music in the Park series kicked off their season this past Thursday. The Farmer's Market opens each Thursday at 3 p.m. and the concert is held at 7 p.m. in the Dodge Park band shell. This Thursday's concert will feature The Phoenix Theory, a rock group, and the following Thursday features the Dale Vaughn Band, a country rock band. On June 23rd, the concert will feature Crush...The Best of Bon

Jovi. Mr. Vanderpool urged everyone to attend these fun events held on Thursdays throughout the summer.

Mr. Vanderpool announced this is the season where the City requests voluntary compliance with the odd/even water policy. In an effort to reduce instances of low water pressure and to try to control water rate increases, residents are asked to limit their outdoor water use to odd/even days based on the last number of their address. All residents are asked to limit outdoor water use between 5 a.m. and 9 a.m., and also between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., when water consumption is at its highest level. Lawn watering should be done between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., and residents with sprinkler systems are urged to take them off of the automatic cycle and only water when needed. Mr. Vanderpool advised that there are more stringent rules for businesses.

Mr. Vanderpool reported that reconstruction of the Senior Center parking lot commenced last week, and this will be replaced with new pavement, along with a number of green infrastructure improvements to the site. He estimated this first stage will last about a month, and they anticipate completion before Sterlingfest in July.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that the Van Dyke road project is going nicely and is nearly completed. The lighting is up, landscape is almost done, and the monument signage will be going in last. He reported that the Dodge Park road project is proceeding nicely as well, and Plumbrook is now open, with project completion estimated for late November. Mr. Vanderpool urged

anyone interested to go to “Cone Zone” on the City’s website for updates on all of the road projects.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Mr. Dwayne McLachlan, City Assessor, made a presentation on the application for an Industrial Facilities Tax Abatement Certificate for J.G. Kern Enterprises, Inc., a Michigan corporation that has been conducting operations in Sterling Heights since 1990. They supply engine and drive train components to Ford Motor Company, General Motors and other automotive-related companies. They are seeking a 50% tax abatement for proposed real investment of \$2.9 million and this will add 41,368 square feet of manufacturing space that will increase their production capacity and employment opportunities at the facility. The property investment will generate approximately \$110,100 in new city tax revenue over the recommended 10-year abatement period, and this is in addition to the current real property taxes, which would equate to \$967,000 over the same 10-year period. It will create 55 new jobs and will generate an overall positive economic activity of over \$4.4 million through the multiplier effect. He advised that the district was previously created in May 1990.

Mayor Taylor opened the public hearing.

There was no one in the audience who wished to speak on this item.

Mayor Taylor closed the public hearing.

Moved by Schmidt, seconded by Romano, **RESOLVED**, that the application for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate by J.G. Kern Enterprises, Inc., at 44044 Merrill Road is hereby approved for a period of ten years in accordance with the guidelines established by City Council and the Mayor and City Clerk are hereby authorized to sign, as applicable, all documents required in conjunction with this approval.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated that Mr. Kern is in the audience, and she appreciated their business and their desire to stay in Sterling Heights to be part of the community, and she wished him well.

Mayor Pro-Tem Romano agreed with Councilwoman Schmidt. He noted the corporation has been around since 1990. He pointed out they have paid a lot of taxes in the city over those years, and he added they are very much appreciated. He commended them on their building, felt it is something for which Sterling Heights can be very proud, and thanked Mr. Kern for staying in Sterling Heights.

Mayor Taylor echoed those sentiments and thanked Mr. Kern for his commitment to Sterling Heights, indicating he is happy to support these types of initiatives. He recalled there was criticism for them in the past, but felt the cumulative effect in doing this year after year has paid dividends for the city and its residents.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

2. Mr. McLachlan made a presentation on the request from Beta Steel Corporation for a tax abatement. He explained they are applying for exemption on property they acquired in 2014 and are in the process of upgrading and modernizing. The 50% abatement request is for real property investment of \$1,566,860. The proposed real property investment will generate an additional increase of \$59,500 in new city tax revenue over the recommended 10-year abatement period. This new tax revenue is in addition to the current real property city taxes, which over the same 10-year period, will equate to approximately \$863,000. The applicant's investment will create approximately 52 new jobs in the city, and generate an overall positive impact in the general economy of about \$4.1 million through the multiplier effect of those 52 jobs proposed to be created.

Mayor Taylor opened the public hearing.

Mr. Charles Jefferson inquired as to the percentage of the new jobs will be going to residents of Sterling Heights, and he claimed it is handled that way in other communities.

Mayor Taylor closed the public hearing.

Moved by Romano, seconded by Schmidt, **RESOLVED**, that the application for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate by Beta Steel Corporation at 6300 Hughes Drive is hereby approved for a period of ten years in accordance with the guidelines established by City Council and the

Mayor and City Clerk are hereby authorized to sign, as applicable, all documents required in conjunction with this approval.

Mayor Pro-Tem Romano calculated this company will be paying almost \$1 million over the next ten years, with 52 new jobs. He addressed the question raised as to whether these jobs will go to the residents in Sterling Heights, and he replied that anyone who is qualified should be able to apply. He felt if two applicants are equal and one comes from Sterling Heights, it would be nice for them to show preference, but he felt qualifications come first over residency.

Mayor Taylor stated this is a big investment in the City of Sterling Heights, and he appreciated the owner's commitment to the city.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

3. Police Chief Berg made a presentation on the introduction to the ordinance with regard to animal control. He stated that in 2013, the Police Department looked for ways to cut their budget, including looking at options for animal control needs, such as using private contracted veterinary clinics for this purpose. He informed that Sterling Heights, along with Warren, St. Clair Shores, Eastpointe and Roseville Police Departments combined to form Macomb Animal Control Coalition (MACC) to lower their costs by combining forces. They worked with a local animal hospital but by the start of 2015, the animal hospital became overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of

animals that were being brought to their facility and eventually ended their affiliation with MACC. Since that time, they have relied on dozens of animal rescue groups to assist them in the placement of animals, but those groups have turned their attention elsewhere, leaving the city with very few options. They are now holding dogs and cats in their basement kennels, sometimes as long as two to three weeks. They do not have the staffing to deal with the extended stays, which include weekends and evenings, and they lack the facilities to handle the number of animals being brought in. Chief Berg noted they do not have the facilities to handle hostile, aggressive dogs, so for these reasons, he is recommending the City renew their relationship with the Macomb County Animal Shelter. He outlined some of the benefits of the Macomb County Animal Shelter, including providing a no-kill facility, a central location for citizens to search for lost pets, in-house veterinary care, animal welfare accommodation, a climate-controlled environment, direct adoption programs, facility to handle quarantined and/or hostile and aggressive animals, ability to hold animals long-term and staffing and equipment for large-scale situations. In order to participate with the County, the City must modify their ordinance to accommodate the County's requirement that the City participates in "SNR" (Shelter, Neuter and Return program), with regard to feral cats. Chief Berg added that the City only deals with an average of five feral cats each year. Young cats or domesticated cats will still be put through the adoption program if deemed appropriate. Other

cats will be tested for major feline diseases, vaccinated against rabies and common feline viruses before being released. This follows the national trend in dealing with the feral cat population, and areas that follow this are seeing an average of 50% decrease in the feral cat population. He added that the ordinance will only allow a small number of cats to be neutered, vaccinated and released back from where they came from.

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Romano, **RESOLVED**, to introduce the ordinance amending Chapter 8, Section 8-9 of the City Code to facilitate the shelter, neuter and release program in Sterling Heights.

Councilwoman Ziarko was aware of residents who have paid for the spay/neuter for feral cats and then released them to where they came from, so this ordinance will actually help those residents who have been paying for this out of their own pockets. She inquired as to whether the City will be paying for this service, or whether the cost will be taken on by the County.

Chief Berg responded that the County currently contracts with a rescue group that handles this process for them, and the rescue group has received a grant that pays 100% of this cost. He did not know how long that grant money will last, but at this time there is no cost to the City.

Mayor Taylor stated the City has tried many ways to solve this problem, so they will be participating in this "Shelter, Neuter and Return" program. He added it is reassuring that it does not affect a lot of cats. He urged residents to refrain from feeding these cats because it will encourage more and more to

come, they will breed and continue to be a problem in the neighborhood. He requested anyone spotting these cats to contact Animal Control Officers, and they will come out to address the situation humanely.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Romano, **RESOLVED**, to approve the Agreement for Macomb County Animal Control Services between the City of Sterling Heights and the County of Macomb, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign it on behalf of the City.

Councilwoman Ziarko agreed with Mayor Taylor that the City has tried alternative solutions, but with those no longer working out, they are back to the original plan.

Councilman Shannon stated he has received a lot of feedback from residents in Sterling Heights and Macomb County regarding the high level of excellence with the County facility, so he is in support of this agreement.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

4. Ms. Linda Godfrey questioned Item E on the Consent Agenda, where the sale of fixed assets are to go into a separate designated park improvement account to fund future Parks & Recreation projects. She inquired as to where the money is to be placed and under what line item, designated as “673000”.

Mr. Jeffrey Norgrove questioned Item L and how much road salt is left over from last year. He questioned whether Mr. Romano supports Item M.

Moved by Koski, seconded by Romano, **RESOLVED**, to approve the Consent Agenda:

- A. To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 17, 2016, as presented.
- B. To approve payment of the bills as presented: General Fund - \$486,592.53, Water & Sewer Fund - \$97,077.94, Other Funds - \$2,467,130.68, Total Checks - \$3,052,801.15.
- C. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for the replacement of electrical service panels at City Hall to Danboise Mechanical, Inc., 31625 Grand River, Farmington Hills, MI 48336, at a cost of \$74,000.
- D. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for rental of tents, tables, chairs and accessories for city events to S & R Event Rental, 465 Stephenson Highway, Troy, MI 48083, at unit prices bid for two years and authorize the City Manager to exercise the option to extend the bid term one year at the unit pricing bid.
- E. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for the sale of surplus City-owned property commonly known as 37504, 37520 and 37536 Dundee Street to Palazzolo Family LLC, 3737 Cherry Creek Lane, Sterling Heights, MI

- 48314 at the bid amount of \$81,000 and authorize the City Manager to sign all required documents on behalf of the City.
- F. **RESOLVED**, to set a public hearing date of July 5, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., regarding the application by Ric-Man Construction, Inc., to establish an Industrial Development District (IDD) at 42600 R Mancini Drive.
- G. **RESOLVED**, to set a public hearing date of July 5, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. regarding the application by SDE Mancini Holdings, LLC to establish an Industrial Development District (IDD) on vacant property situated on Mound Road and at 18-1/2 Mile Road.
- H. **RESOLVED**, to set a public hearing date of July 5, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. regarding the application by Metro Industrial Properties, LLC to establish a Commercial Redevelopment District (CRD) at 42373 and 42501 Van Dyke.
- I. **RESOLVED**, to receive the lawsuit, *Elijzi vs. City of Sterling Heights*; Macomb County Circuit Court Case No. 16-1468-NO.
- J. **RESOLVED**, to purchase library books through the Suburban Library Cooperative, 44750 Delco Blvd., Sterling Heights, MI 48313, for fiscal year 2016/2017 in the amount of \$95,000.
- K. **RESOLVED**, to purchase a Cues MPlus+ 200' portable push camera system from The Safety Company, LLC, d/b/a M Tech Company, 7401 First Place, Cleveland, OH 44146, through an Oakland County cooperative bid, at a total expense of \$11,933.02.

- L. **RESOLVED**, to purchase 10,500 tons of ‘seasonal delivery’ road salt at pricing available through the City of Farmington Hills’ cooperative bid for the 2016/2017 winter season.
- M. **RESOLVED**, to approve the application by Funfest Productions, Inc. for a fireworks display permit on Sunday, July 3, 2016 at Freedom Hill County Park, 15000 Metropolitan Parkway, subject to a final site inspection by personnel of the Sterling Heights Fire Department.
- N. **RESOLVED**, to:
- (A) Approve the Publications Contract between the City of Sterling Heights and J Kraemer Designs, LLC in accordance with City Code §2-227(A) for the period September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2018, with an option to have the City Manager extend the term for up to two one-year periods upon mutual consent and on the same terms and conditions held within the contract; and,
 - (B) Authorize the City Manager to execute all documents required in conjunction with this approval and future renewals.
- O. **RESOLVED**, to approve the maintenance agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and AT&T for telecommunications equipment for the period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 at a cost of \$21,330 and authorize the City Manager to sign the agreement on behalf of the City.
- P. **RESOLVED**, to approve the Legal Services Agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and Keller Thoma, P.C. for special legal counsel

services – labor law, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign it on behalf of the City.

- Q. **RESOLVED**, to approve the five-year extension of the master service agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and Comlink, LLC for “dark” fiber optic network connections to remote City facilities and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign all documents required in conjunction with this approval.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

CONSIDERATION

5. Mr. Kyle Langlois, Parks and Recreation Director, made a presentation on a Quality of Life proposal and a recommendation on how to turn this proposal into a reality. He provided some background as to how they have arrived at this point. The Vision 2030 Plan placed a high emphasis on quality of life and place making, and he provided a large-scale conceptual plan at the 2016 Strategic Planning Session that contained three tiers of Quality of Life upgrades, including construction of a new community center, enhancements to Dodge Park and significant improvements to the City’s park system. He explained they have spent countless hours using feedback and solid information to come up with what is their recommended plan. He thanked the residents who attended forums, submitted comment cards and provided input. He also thanked his Parks and Recreation staff and key administrators for helping to shape this final plan. Mr. Langlois felt it is comprehensive in

what it can offer their residents, but conservative as far as the expense to their residents. He stated that everything being unveiled in this plan can be achieved for about \$63 per year for the average Sterling Heights household. He also emphasized there is no plan to require typical membership fees similar to what other communities charge. He outlined some of the amenities included in the plan.

Mr. Langlois explained the first part of the plan, which is a new community center on the 5.8-acre open space at the southeast corner of Utica and Dodge Park Roads to replace a 13,000 square-foot facility that no longer meets the needs of the community. Mr. Langlois pointed out the current 40-year-old facility is less than 1/10th of a square foot per resident. The new 122,000-square-foot two-story building will have parking provided on the 1.8-acre parcel immediately east of the site. It will house three multi-sport gymnasiums, situated side-by-side with a field house section in the center, and can be kept open for large events, or separated off into the three gymnasiums to house a variety of different activities at the same time. He outlined the various groups and organizations that would make use of this facility, as well as the opportunity to have an adult open gym, numerous sports, and the ability to make the gym available for rent. This building will also house a community room, where the coffee house concerts, special dances, Veteran's Day ceremony, Cultural Exchange activities, theater performances, community presentations and families gathering for special

functions can take place. The building will also have a Parent/Tot room, as well as a dedicated teen room, three dedicated dance rooms and two fitness rooms. It will have meeting and training rooms, and will also provide a second-floor walking track overlooking the gymnasiums.

Mr. Langlois explained the second part of the conceptual plan relates to improvements/amenities to Dodge Park, including an open splash park on the south side where the current recreation center lies. Mr. Langlois explained the splash park offers play opportunities that swimming pools cannot offer, as well as a much lower cost than a swimming pool. It would not be fenced and would not require a fee to use it. Another amenity includes a permanent pavilion for the Farmer's Market, which will be converted to an ice rink in the winter months and would be used for other functions throughout the year, becoming a true gathering place in the community. Another proposed amenity includes the enclosure of the two bocce ball courts at the Senior Center, which are currently underutilized due to weather as well as the presence of mosquitoes during the summer months. The combination of a climate-controlled facility, in conjunction with upgraded courts, will provide opportunity for a greatly-enhanced playing experience, and will be available for use by the general public when not in use for activities coordinated through the Senior Center. The plan is to repurpose a currently underutilized room for a modest workout room with low-impact fitness equipment. Another amenity proposed for Dodge Park includes a mini soccer field,

which is to be located next to the basketball court. It will be open for everyone during normal hours, and there will be times when it will be available for rentals and multi-sport training, including soccer, football, baseball and lacrosse. Another amenity that has been a top priority for a number of years is a skate park, which will be located north of the Court. It will not be a traditional-style skate park, but an aesthetically-pleasing “skate plaza”. The design incorporates a permanent stage and built-in seating, making it an ideal location for city ceremonies such as Law Day and Memorial Day. He noted there are only three skate parks in Macomb County, two public and one private, which he felt makes this an important piece of the proposal for not only the City but also for the entire region. A permanent 20-foot by 20-foot pavilion and a canoe and kayak livery are two new improvements proposed for the Nature Center, with the pavilion being able to be used for field trips, birthday parties, one-day programs and special events. The canoe and kayak livery will help achieve the high priority placed on offering services that allow people to take advantage of the Clinton River. Senior, nature and special recreation programming will be a priority, in addition to general rentals. In association with the livery, there are also plans to install an accessible paddle launch and landing sites at various locations along the river.

Mr. Langlois explained the third part of the conceptual plan is significant improvement to 26 parks throughout the city. This equates to 20

neighborhood parks receiving much-needed rehabilitation and enhancements, as well as renovation at the 5 major parks, and the development of property located in the area of Schoenherr and Metropolitan Parkway. He explained there is a lack of dedicated funding to maintain the park system, and the city is at a crucial point having to renovate almost every park after fifty years with no available funds. Mr. Langlois emphasized this cannot be done through the normal budgetary process due to the size and scope of the need. He explained it would take about twenty years of setting aside \$1 million each year, and that would not take into account any new offerings to residents. He did not feel many of the parks can wait that long for rehabilitation. These common improvements in the parks involve replacing play structures, resurfacing paths, renovating athletic courts and fields, resurfacing parking lots, replacing entrance signs, and installing permanent aesthetically-pleasing site amenities such as garbage cans and picnic tables, all handicapped-accessible. He explained the major parks will go through similar improvements. Mr. Langlois explained that improvements to two of the parks are not included in this plan, as those improvements will be paid for through the Community Development Block Grant program funds in a similar time frame. The installation of a dog park is included in the plan, to be located at Magnolia Park. It will be a place for dog owners who need a place to allow their pets to socialize with other dogs in an outreach setting. It will be illuminated for year-round use, and will have access to a restroom

facility for humans as well. He added that, as is common with dog parks, there will be a modest annual fee to gain access, and proof of vaccinations and dog license will be required. A disc golf course at South Nelson Park is also included in the plan, and it will serve people of all ages and abilities. Mr. Langlois explained they also plan to install a non-motorized path connecting Joseph Delia Park with the nature preserve in the northwestern section of the City. It will be an asset for pedestrians looking for a faster route to go northwest but also for fitness enthusiasts looking for a nice trail on which to run, walk or bike.

Mr. Langlois addressed the desire from many residents to have a community pool, and the research the City has done to try to make this happen. He stated the reality is that they are not in a position to include an indoor aquatic component in their plan at this time. There is a lack of available space, and their goal is to achieve the highest level of fiscal responsibility and sustainability, both of which has caused them to look in other directions, and he was pleased to report there are other viable options with the City of Warren and the Utica Community Schools, as well as a potential private partnership. They can fill in the aquatics gap through these partnerships. Mr. Langlois concluded his presentation, noting that this plan cannot happen without an additional operating budget consideration, and part of this plan includes dedicated funding for operating and spending related to the plan,

including supplies, staffing, utilities, maintenance, and other contracts required to execute this plan.

Mr. Brian Baker, Finance Director, addressed the financial components of the plan. He reported that, in spite of all the savings the City has achieved in the last six or seven years as a result of the housing downturn due to the loss of tax dollars and state funding cuts, the City budget does not allow them to fund their improvements or make needed repairs to the existing parks. This proposal funds the needed investments and covers any new operating costs, and is a fixed 0.97 mil. He compared that to the entire City millage rate of slightly over 15 mils. The millage would fund the improvement costs through a bond to expedite the improvements and also funds the operating costs on an annual basis. The funds would be accounted for separately and tracked to ensure they are spent for their legally designated purpose. He stated that interest rates are currently low and the City has excellent bond ratings, so the timing is good for this proposal. He reported that the City has very little tax-funded debt, so the debt ratio would remain very low with this proposal. If approved by the voters, the millage would start in July 2017, and the City's tax rate would still be lower than the vast majority of cities in the State, and would continue to be one of the lowest in the County. Mr. Baker stated that, even if this is approved, the City's millage rate would still be 4.9 mils below the average of all cities in Macomb County. He added that businesses make up about one-third of the tax base in Sterling Heights, so

that lowers the impact on residents. The cost to the average homeowner would be \$63 per year, or \$5.25 per month, and would be less for those who itemize their income taxes and property taxes. For these homeowners, the average cost would drop to less than \$50 annually, and he reminded this is a “per household” cost, not “per person” cost.

Mr. Langlois thanked the Council for the opportunity to present this plan tonight, and he urged them, as they are considering this proposal, to think about what they spend their money on each month. He pointed out this is an average cost per household of \$5.25 per month, and less if they itemize their taxes. Mr. Langlois briefly listed the proposed enhancements once again, and asked for the Council’s approval to put this on the November 2016 ballot.

Mayor Taylor appreciated the hard work the staff has put into the preparation of this plan, and he opened the floor for public comments.

Mr. Michael Lombardini stated more information needs to be provided as to the breakdown of the money to be spent. He felt that financial information relating to the plan needs to be made public, and they need to determine whether they want these amenities at the cost they are being asked to pay for, because the question may be whether the residents want a pavilion/ice rink at a cost of \$1.3 million, or would they rather see 65,000 new books at the library. He understood their desire to allow the residents to vote on the issue, but he felt it is

City Council's fiduciary responsibility to verify the amount of money proposed for each of these specific projects is worth the cost.

Ms. Jazmine Early stated she is not in favor of something so expensive. She stated if Sterling Heights taxes are lower than those in other neighboring communities, the City should be trying to keep them low.

Mr. Stu Alderman stated he and his neighbors are in support of this proposal, and are aware that it will increase property values. He felt this shows quality of life for all ages, including seniors and children. He stated they have to trust City Council and the staff to do what is best for the residents, and he felt an average annual cost of \$63 per household is a good deal for the residents.

Mr. Kevin Hanson spoke in favor of the Parks and Recreation project, and he thanked the Council for their consideration to place this on November's ballot. He stated he was a coach at Stevenson High School for 38 years, and although he owns homes in other communities, he has chosen Sterling Heights to live because of their wonderful park system.

Ms. Fromm stated this is an opportunity for Sterling Heights to be a progressive city. She is a retired Utica Community Schools teacher who has made Sterling Heights her home for the last 31 years and has raised two children here. She felt the plan is reasonably priced and

will raise property values, and urged residents, when voting, to consider what is best for the entire community. She commended Mr. Langlois and the staff involved for putting this together.

Mr. John Spica agreed with Ms. Fromm. He stated when people decide where to live, they look at school systems, city services and quality of life. He added that he fully supports this proposal and asked Council to consider approval of placing this on November's ballot.

Ms. Lorraine Lawrence, a Sterling Heights resident for 12 years, is now raising her four daughters in this community and stated they have participated in many of the Parks and Recreation programs. She could see the need for improvements, and urged the Council to put this proposal on the ballot.

Mr. Charles Jefferson expressed concern that there will be added operating costs for these improvements in the future. He was also concerned because he felt residents of Macomb County will all eventually have to take on the costs of Flint and Detroit that will ultimately be passed on from the State. He stated he would like to see it on the ballot, but felt each resident needs to look at their own financial situation before voting in favor of the proposal.

Ms. Linda Godfrey stated she has obtained a copy of the proposed costs for the community center and all of the amenities, and she

claimed this totals \$60,766,000 and that did not include architectural costs, feasibility studies and engineering. She pointed out the proposal tonight is to put a proposal on the ballot for between \$40 and \$45 million. She is opposed because what is being presented tonight does not include a breakdown of costs. She commended Mr. Langlois on the great presentation, and added she would like to see these improvements to the community, but felt the facts need to be presented. She stated it was presented that the average cost per household will be approximately \$63 per year, but she cautioned as property values rise, so will that amount. She also pointed out many other fiscal responsibilities that are being placed on taxpayers, including increase in driver's license and registration fees, an underfunded health care and pension system for teachers, increased water rates, massive costs to the State due to situations in Flint, Detroit and Highland Park, that she felt will be passed down to all residents. She felt this should not be placed on the ballot.

Mr. Geoffrey Garipey stated he likes the idea of the plan but does not have the confidence that the economy will remain where it is. He acknowledged that the area is recovering, but he felt it has been a recovery that has left the middle class out. He was concerned the housing market will go down and questioned what happens when they do not get the average of \$63 per year from each household. He

stated the projected costs should be broken down in greater detail, and that would give the residents more of a voice in the improvements they feel are important and those they feel could be put off. He commended Mr. Langlois on a good presentation, and he has confidence in Mr. Baker as a good financial director, but he was concerned about the economy.

Mr. Callin Vaara, a student at Sterling Heights High School, stated he is an athlete and felt these improvements will be great. He admitted she does not yet pay property taxes, but felt approximately \$5 a month per household is an incredibly low price to pay for such improvements. He felt it will add value to all of the homes in Sterling Heights. He said for the 2030 plan, he will be 30 years old in 2030, and would like the improvements for his future family in Sterling Heights.

Ms. Jackie Ryan felt this was a dramatic presentation, but was more of a “Christmas wish list” than something that could be a reality. She stated the older population will have to be paying for this, and she felt the operating expenses in the future are unknown at this time. She felt this is “too much, too soon, too fast” and was opposed.

Mr. Jeffrey Norgrove was in support of placing this on the ballot and letting the citizens make the decision. He stated the City has 30 parks, and Parks and Recreation puts on numerous programs

throughout the year, including helping with Sterlingfest and Sterling Christmas, and yet their budget is only \$1,957,950 for everything they do. He commended Mr. Langlois on the plan, and felt it should be placed on the ballot, and the citizens of this city will have some tough choices to make as to what they want to do. He felt if this proposal is placed on the ballot and turned down in November, and the City does not have enough money to maintain the existing parks, they may have to consider selling some of the parkland for development with homes or condominiums. Mr. Norgrove felt they have ignored this issue for too long, and it is time to address it.

Mr. Joe Deschryver commented that outdoor ice rinks are difficult to maintain and very dependent upon weather conditions. He questioned whether the average \$63 per household includes the regular maintenance costs. He questioned who will be driving the Zamboni for the ice rink, and felt there are a lot of questions that need to be answered prior to this being placed on a ballot. He could see no sense in having all of these amenities if they cannot afford to maintain them.

Mayor Taylor stated Mr. Langlois mentioned in his presentation the 0.97 mil would include a portion for the construction and a portion for the operation, so there would be no additional cost for the maintenance because it is all built in to the 0.97 mil.

Ms. Verna Babula stated with the recent two tax increases and increased costs for food, medical care, housing and utilities, she felt this additional millage will be a hardship for many residents, especially senior citizens living on a fixed income. She suggested that businesses provide recreational activities for the citizens.

Mr. Joel Casey, a Sterling Heights resident for 30 years and former Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation employee, commented that being the third largest community in the State of Michigan without a community center is “heartbreaking”. He stated the neighborhood parks were designed so that no child has to cross a major street to gain access to a park, and he felt it is important to maintain those parks. He suspected that a lot of the smaller parks are used even more frequently than the larger parks. Mr. Casey stated he may have to prioritize his budget but felt it is a reasonable amount to keep the parks up and be able to take his grandchildren to a community center.

Ms. Maddie Ritchens, a student at Stevenson High School, felt this is a great idea, and added that \$63 per year is a reasonable cost that she could even come up with as a teenager.

Ms. Jenny McKay stated she and her family have lived in Sterling Heights for about 7 years. She has a 4-year-old and a 6-year-old and they have taken advantage of the programs offered through Parks and Recreation. She stated she is highly supportive of the proposal. She

stated her youngest has a speech problem and these programs, led by fabulous instructors, have helped her socialize with her peers.

Mayor Taylor closed the audience participation and thanked residents for their input.

Mr. Langlois informed that the cost list which seemed to be in question and was being circulated this evening among some of the residents is actually a Capital Improvement Priority Plan, which is part of the Master Plan being worked on with Wade Trim. He stated this Capital Improvement Priority Plan includes everything that needs to be done; however, he emphasized that these are not all included in the proposal being presented tonight for the millage, so they are two separate documents. They have to list them in accordance with State guidelines and would eventually like to see everything on that list done, but that is the difference in the cost between the \$60+ million on the Capital Improvement Priority Plan and the proposed \$40 million to \$45 million put on the proposal being presented this evening. Mr. Langlois provided a general breakdown in the costs: \$22 million for the community center, which includes land studies, engineering and architectural fees; \$15 million for the Dodge Park and major park improvements, as well as improvements to the Senior Center, Nature Preserve Path, and out of that \$15 million, almost \$7 million is just for renovation of current amenities; \$7 million for neighborhood parks, including the dog park, and \$5.3 million of that is renovations and enhancements to what is currently there; and \$1

million for the aquatics option, which has yet to be determined. Mr. Langlois stated what is included in the proposal is what they are willing to stick to, which is a maximum of \$45 million. He acknowledged additional needs in the community but they have prioritized and included only those top priorities in this plan.

Mr. Baker reiterated that the 0.97 mil is a fixed amount that will not increase. He explained the only thing that can increase is taxable property values, and Proposal A limits how much it can go up, which is the rate of inflation, which this year was 0.3%, so that would be the only increase.

Mr. Vanderpool appreciated the residents wanting an itemized breakdown, and they will get to that point. He indicated they have spent months looking at the fine details of these costs and working with architects and expert consultants, so he was very confident that the \$45 million is a very good estimate of where this project will come in. He assured they cannot exceed the millage rate if the voters approve this. He stated that all of this would have to go through a competitive bidding process with detailed construction documents to ensure this project stays within budget. Mr. Vanderpool noted there was some mention of a list where one project could be chosen over another, but he stated this would be one ballot question to approve the entire proposal as submitted.

Moved by Skrzyniarz, seconded by Shannon, **RESOLVED**, to adopt the resolution placing on the ballot for the November 8, 2016 election an

amendment to the City Charter for the purpose of authorizing the levy of .97 mills for 20 years as a special, dedicated millage to acquire, construct, furnish, equip and operate parks and recreation improvements, including a new community center.

Councilman Skrzyniarz stated he wants to put this on the ballot to let the people decide for themselves, especially considering the magnitude of the project. He commented that he has been thinking about the City's future, and there were comments made that the parks were good when their kids were small, so they could see no reason why there is a need to expand that. He reminded that creating those parks was a decision the leaders had to make one or two generations ago to invest in the future for the children of today. He felt there are a lot of items in this proposal that will be enjoyed by people of all ages, and this is about investing in the next generation of the City and the families they are going to raise. He stated that "we have to think beyond ourselves", and it cannot be thought of in a selfish way, although he added that people have to also look at paying bills and putting food on the table. He stressed this is going to be a place where there are many community activities that will draw people in. He questioned whether these improvements will be accessible for the disabled.

Mr. Langlois replied that the canoe and kayak launches would be accessible for the handicapped and disabled. He said that the Parks and Recreation Department in Sterling Heights has the best special recreation program in the

area, and they always put an emphasis on accessibility and programming for those with disabilities. He assured everything they do will be up to the highest ADA compliancy codes.

Councilman Skrzyniarz addressed the concern about the fine details of the plan, and stated there is a reason they have a city manager model and why they have such a good reputation as being one of the best-managed cities around. The Council's charge to the city is to help facilitate the visioning process, and out of that through feedback from the residents, they have heard that the City needs better recreation services and the parks need to be maintained. He felt the overall projects are outlined, as well as the costs, and he appreciated some of the concerns about the details of the project, but that is why they have hired a City Manager and he has hired the staff he has so they can make the details run, and he has full confidence that if this proposal passes, this project will be completed as stated.

Councilman Shannon expressed excitement about this proposal. He felt the benefits will be realized in many ways, including attracting and retaining businesses and residents, increasing the tax base, improving environmental quality and bringing the community together in a centralized location. He stated progressive action is necessary to continually attract new residents and businesses. He pointed out they have many assets, including two great school districts, housing with a wide margin in price range, cultural diversity, one of the lowest tax rates in Macomb County, even if this millage is

approved, a high level of safety, and the City's parks. By making upgrades, Sterling Heights can rise above other neighboring communities because of what they have to offer. He understood there will be people in opposition because they feel they may not use the facility or feel it is a worthy endeavor, but he requested they think about the "big picture" and the future marketability of the City. Tax revenues will decrease and strain the City budget, making it difficult for the City to maintain the high level of quality services. He stated he will be voting in favor of this Resolution.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated they have heard from residents on both sides of this issue, and one comment was that this is not fair to the residents. She disagreed, pointing out what they are doing is completely fair because they are putting the decision into the hands of the residents. She stated she accepts this, whether it passes or fails, because it reflects the will of the people. When talking with youth, she got responses that Parks and Recreation is important and they would like to see a pool. They want more activities for their age. She has also listened to seniors who want this community center because they feel everyone should have a facility, not just the seniors. Councilwoman Schmidt raised the question on the Safe Streets Initiative that was passed by the voters; however, there was some talk about Mound and Van Dyke not being improved quickly, and that was because "the City ran out of money from the Safe Street Initiative". She understood that

those two roads are not being paid for through that Safe Street Initiative, and the purpose of that Initiative is to pay for residential roads.

Mr. Baker replied to inquiry that the City has not run out of money. They funded 0.8 mil for the neighborhood roads and that continues on for the next three years.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned the timeline for completion of this proposed project if it is put on the ballot and passed by the voters.

Mr. Langlois replied a building of this size will take some time, possibly up to two years; however, he assured they can work on a number of the other amenities concurrently. He estimated it may take up to six years to complete everything, but felt the majority could be completed within the first couple of years.

Councilwoman Schmidt addressed the Capital Improvement Priority Plan, which is part of the Master Plan mentioned earlier, and recalled the splash park has been in the Master Plan for about twenty years. She reminded that just because something is on the Master Plan does not mean it will be done quickly or done at all. She inquired as to the distance between the proposed dog park in Magnolia Park and the abutting residential properties.

Mr. Langlois replied the dog park would be in the middle of the park, so even at the closest point to the abutting residential property, there would be a distance of at least 100 feet. He assured the goal was to keep it far away from neighboring residential properties.

Councilwoman Schmidt felt it should be kept as far away as possible from the residential neighbors, and she indicated her support of the ballot proposal. Councilwoman Koski stated this includes everything that has been talked about since she has been on City Council. She heard some of the financial concerns, and the reference to \$63 a year, but clarified the amount per household is based on the taxable value of their home multiplied by 0.97 mil. She recalled when there were other millages in the past, the City included a calculator on the website where residents could go in and plug in their home's taxable value to see exactly what they would be paying for the millage, and she inquired as to whether placing that calculator on the website would be a possibility.

Mr. Baker replied that can be done again, but for estimation purposes, they can multiply their taxable value by 1.0 mil to get a rough idea of the amount they would be paying.

Councilwoman Koski felt they should be providing financial information to the residents, along with anticipated timelines for these projects. She inquired as to whether it will be bonded, and added there is a cost each time they bond, so the fewer bonds they do, the more they will save.

Mr. Baker replied all of that information will be made public and the residents will be educated as to the cost, impact to them and timelines, just as they have been for previous millages. He informed that two-thirds of the \$45 million is debt-based, and the remainder is for operating costs.

Mr. Vanderpool replied to inquiry that if City Council approves the proposal this evening, they will begin to finalize the public education material, which will include FAQ's, a lot of information on a specific webpage devoted to the proposal on the website, flyers, and they use community forums to talk to community groups who are interested in hearing and learning more about it, and will provide information about itemized costs, financing and other details, all of which is necessary for voters to make a very informed decision. Councilwoman Koski wanted to make sure all residents have that information so they can make informed decisions.

Councilwoman Ziarko felt this is long overdue, adding that both the proposal and the presentation were well-done. She stated they cannot continue to go through getting all of this information and putting the money into the research to inform people without going through and making that decision. She felt the best part is the residents will decide the type of city in which they want to live. She agreed that the splash park has been on the list for many years and it has never been developed, so she felt it is time. She felt paying taxes is part of being a good citizen because it represents what the community can accomplish collectively that means so much. She was glad if the Council approves this it will be on a presidential election ballot because they will get more people voting. She liked Councilwoman Koski's idea of providing the calculator on the website, and giving the residents as much

information as possible without telling them how to vote. She could see no reason to not place this on the ballot.

Mayor Pro-Tem Romano inquired as to how much this millage will cost on a \$100,000 home.

Mr. Baker replied it is based on the taxable value of the home. If the assessed value is \$100,000, then the millage would be \$97 a year. He clarified that the cost for the average homeowner in Sterling Heights would be \$63 a year, but some will pay more and some will pay less. He stated that if the market value of a home is \$100,000, the taxable value is about one-half of that, or \$50,000, and the millage rate of 0.97 mil would be multiplied by \$50,000 to determine the millage tax.

Mayor Pro-Tem Romano is in favor of some of these items, but he felt some of those items can be accomplished without a tax increase. He stated opposition to a community center, especially with the economy just coming back. He stated one of the complaints he is hearing is that their current center is overcrowded, but he suggested limiting the use of the facilities to residents only. He urged the teenagers complaining about “nothing to do” to go to Dodge Park. He stated he will be voting against the proposal the way it is written.

Mayor Taylor stated that if someone has a house that sells for \$100,000, they will pay only \$50 a year. A \$200,000 house would cost that homeowner about \$97 a year for the millage. They used the average cost of a home in

Sterling Heights to come up with the \$63 per household per year figure. He stated the classes held through Parks and Recreation are mainly comprised of Sterling Heights residents, and pointed out that many of the surrounding communities, including Macomb and Shelby Townships, along with the cities of Warren and Troy, have their own community centers and facilities. He stated the City has an exceptional program for those with special needs, but he emphasized they are not “building a wall around Sterling Heights” and want to welcome people to show them what the City has to offer. He understood the desire for residents to see an itemized breakdown of costs, but he assured the proposal will come in the way it is budgeted. He cautioned the problem with offering a “cafeteria-style” plan is that everyone wants something different and there is no way to get the input of 131,000 people to come up with a plan that everyone will like. He was confident they have received good feedback and have come up with a proposal that asks the community what kind of city in which they wish to live. He stated he knows he has to pay taxes, but likes to look at whether he is getting a good value for what he spends, and he felt this is a good value. It will affect potential employees and business owners looking at the community to see if this is a place where they want to invest. He felt it is a fabulous proposal and a great presentation, and he thanked Mr. Langlois and Mr. Baker for their hard work. He also thanked Mr. Vanderpool for the foresight he had in championing this

effort, adding it takes a lot to put something like this together, and he stated that is a testament to the City.

Yes: Skrzyniarz, Shannon, Koski, Schmidt, Taylor, Ziarko.

No: Romano. The motion carried.

RESOLUTION

This Resolution was made and adopted at a meeting of the City Council of the City of Sterling Heights, Macomb County, Michigan, held at the City Offices on the 7th day of June, 2016.

Members Present: Koski, Romano, Schmidt, Shannon, Skrzyniarz, Taylor, Ziarko.

Members Absent: None.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Member Skrzyniarz and supported by Member Shannon.

RECITALS

- A. Section 10.01 of the City Charter establishes the maximum authorized tax levy for ad valorem real and personal property in the City.
- B. The Michigan Constitution, the Michigan Home Rule City Act, and the Michigan General Property Tax Act authorize a home rule city to increase the maximum charter tax levy for ad valorem real and personal property with approval of a charter amendment by a majority vote of the electors voting at an election at which such charter amendment proposition is submitted.
- C. Section 20.14 of the City Charter authorizes the City Charter to be amended at any time in the manner authorized by statute, which includes approval of a ballot proposition submitted to the electors of the city at the next regular municipal or general state election.
- D. Considering the City's current and projected financial circumstances and the desire to acquire construct, furnish, equip and operate parks and recreation improvements, including a new community center for the City and its residents, the City Council has determined that it is necessary and appropriate to submit a proposal to amend the City Charter tax rate set forth in Section 10.01 in order to increase the maximum authorized tax levy for the purpose of providing funding specifically dedicated to parks and recreation improvements at the regular election to be held on November 8, 2016.

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Sterling Heights as follows:

The City Council by at least a three-fifths vote of its members-elect, pursuant to the authority granted by the Michigan Home Rule Act, Public Act No. 279 of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1909, as amended, proposes that Section 10.01 of the Charter of the City of Sterling Heights shall be amended to read as follows:

10.01. General powers.

The city shall have the power to assess taxes and levy and collect rents, tolls, and excises. The annual ad valorem tax levy shall not exceed six (6) mills for the first four (4) years beginning with the first fiscal year under this charter. The annual ad valorem tax levy shall not exceed nine (9) mills for the next four (4) years, beginning with the fifth fiscal year. Beginning with the ninth fiscal year dating from the adoption of this charter, the annual ad valorem tax levy shall not exceed twelve (12) mills.

In addition to the foregoing authorization, the city may levy an annual ad valorem millage not exceeding a total of 2.5 mills, which is comprised of the following dedicated components: 1.7 mills for police and fire protection, and 0.8 mills for local street improvements. This additional annual ad valorem millage shall be effective for a period of six (6) years commencing July 1, 2014 and expiring on June 30, 2020.

In addition to the foregoing authorizations, the city may levy an annual ad valorem millage not exceeding a total of ninety-seven hundredths mill (0.97 mill), to acquire, construct, furnish, equip and operate parks and recreation improvements, including a new community center. This additional annual ad valorem millage shall be effective for a period of twenty (20) years commencing July 1, 2017 and expiring on June 30, 2037.

The annual tax levy shall be applied to the assessed valuation of all real and personal property subject to taxation in the city as equalized by the state, exclusive of any levy required for the payment of principal and interest on outstanding bonds of the city and exclusive of any levy authorized by statute to be made beyond the charter tax rate limitation.

The existing Section 10.01 of the Charter of the City of Sterling Heights, which is proposed to be amended by the proposal, reads as follows:

10.01 General powers.

The city shall have the power to assess taxes and levy and collect rents, tolls, and excises. The annual ad valorem tax levy shall not exceed six (6) mills for the first four (4) years beginning with the first fiscal year under this Charter. The annual ad valorem tax levy shall not exceed nine (9) mills for the next four (4) years, beginning with the fifth fiscal year. Beginning with the ninth fiscal year dating from the adoption of this Charter, the annual ad valorem tax levy shall not exceed twelve (12) mills. The annual tax levy shall be applied to the assessed valuation of all real and personal property subject to taxation in the city as equalized by the state, exclusive of any levy required for the payment of principal and interest on outstanding bonds of the city and exclusive of any levy authorized by statute to be made beyond the Charter tax rate limitation.

In addition to the foregoing authorization, the city may levy an annual ad valorem millage not exceeding a total of 2.5 mills, which is comprised of the following dedicated components: 1.7 mills for police and fire protection, and 0.8 mills for local street improvements. This additional annual ad valorem millage shall be effective for a period of six (6) years commencing July 1, 2014 and expiring on June 30, 2020.

The annual tax levy shall be applied to the assessed valuation of all real and personal property subject to taxation in the city as equalized by the state, exclusive of any levy required for the payment of principal and interest on outstanding bonds of the city and exclusive of any levy authorized by statute to be made beyond the charter tax rate limitation.

1. The proposed amendment to Section 10.01 of the City Charter shall be submitted to the electors in the following form:

**CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS CITY CHARTER AMENDMENT
FOR PARKS AND RECREATION MILLAGE**

Shall Section 10.01 of the Charter of the City of Sterling Heights, Michigan, be amended so as to permit the levy by the City of an additional ad valorem tax in an amount not to exceed ninety-seven hundredths mill (0.97 mill) for twenty (20) years, from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2037, to acquire, construct, furnish, equip and operate parks and recreation improvements, including a new community center?

YES

NO

2. The City Clerk shall transmit copies of the proposed amendment of Section 10.01 of the City Charter of the City of Sterling Heights to the Governor of the State of Michigan for

approval, and transmit a copy of the foregoing statement of purpose of the proposed amendment of Section 10.01 of the City Charter to the Attorney General for the State of Michigan for approval, as required by law.

3. The proposed charter amendment of Section 10.01 shall be, and the same is hereby ordered to be, submitted to the qualified electors of this City at a general election to be held on November 8, 2016, and the City Clerk is hereby directed to give notice of the election and notice of registration for such election in the manner prescribed by law and to do all things and to provide all supplies necessary to submit the charter amendment to the vote of such electors as required by law.

4. The proposed charter amendment of Section 10.01 shall be published in full together with the existing charter section amended by the proposed amendment as part of the Notice of Election.

5. The canvass and determination of votes relating to such ballot proposal shall be made in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and the Charter of the City of Sterling Heights.

Ayes: Skrzyniarz, Shannon, Koski, Schmidt, Taylor, Ziarko.

Nays: Romano

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Resolution made and adopted by a 6-1 vote of the City Council of the City of Sterling Heights at a regular meeting held on June 7, 2016.

Mark Carufel
City Clerk

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Mayor Taylor announced that it is after 10 p.m. so they will be taking comments from citizens at this point.

Mr. Jeffrey Norgrove – Inquired of Mr. Baker as to what happened at the Great Lakes Water Authority Board meeting last week, as well as

clarification of why water rates would go up if the residents “have not used enough water”. Raised the idea of holding a “Van Dyke Cruise” this summer to give a boost to local businesses suffering from the effects of the construction, as well as showcasing the improvements made. Questioned whether “Music in the Park” can be brought to other city parks, possibly renting or purchasing a mobile stage.

Mr. Charles Jefferson – Inquired as to how residents of Sterling Heights will be affected by voting yes or no on the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) proposal in the fall. Complained about no east/west routes being discussed north of 15 Mile Road. Questioned what, if anything, the City can do to help Utica Community Schools in their financial difficulties. Recalled a private ice arena and private water park within city limits at one point, and asked why those were closed down, and suggested City should look at reasons why they did not work.

Mr. John Spica – Thanked Mr. Vanderpool and City Council for responding to the complaint on the condition of Donna Road. Van Dyke project needs a deadline because the construction is hurting the local businesses. Would like follow up on status of Fiat Chrysler plant.

Ms. Jazmine Early – Concerned about financial burden placed on community with influx of refugees, and felt Council members should become informed on this.

Mr. Dennis White – Concerned about grass turning brown in the right-of-ways, becoming fire hazards easily ignited by a stray cigarette.

Mr. Baker responded to an earlier question about the status of the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). He explained he is the Macomb County Representative on that Authority, appointed by Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel and confirmed by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. He stated that the water and sewer rates were set two weeks ago, and Macomb voted against the increase. They try to achieve the savings they need and are still paying the \$50 million lease payment per year. It was a two-year budget, so everyone has paid \$150 million toward the lease payment and they were promised a savings. He was disappointed none of the savings were shown in the water rates, so that was one reason Macomb voted against the increase. He indicated the GLWA sets the water rates, and the Macomb County Public Works office sets the sewer rates. He addressed the question as to why rates go up when the volumes go down, stating that the majority of the cost for the GLWA is fixed, so if people use less water, it actually lowers their bills, but then the individual rates have to go up to bring in enough revenue to cover the amount of the fixed rate. He stated sewer

rates are 100% fixed, and the water rates are about 60% fixed. He assured they are trying to do all they can to bring about transparency with the GLWA similar to the transparency they have in the City of Sterling Heights.

6. Moved by Romano, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to:
- (a) Appoint Marc D. Kaszubski as City Attorney effective June 8, 2016; and
 - (b) Approve the Legal Services Agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and Marc D. Kaszubski on behalf of O'Reilly Rancilio, P.C. for the period June 8, 2016 through June 30, 2018, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the Agreement on behalf of the City.

Mayor Pro-Tem Romano stated Mr. Kaszubski has "big shoes to fill", but he is confident Mr. Kaszubski is very qualified to do the job.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated she is comfortable with the selection both by the O'Reilly Rancilio P.C. firm, as well as the City. She stated she is confident that he can handle whatever they give him, and having worked with the City for six or seven years so he is familiar with what they do and how they do it, so she felt it will be a seamless transition.

Mayor Taylor stated the City has always had a good working relationship with the O'Reilly Rancilio Law Firm ever since Sterling Heights became a city, and Mr. Kaszubski will become the third city attorney they have ever had. He pointed out that Mr. Kaszubski has a background with Sterling Heights, and they have a great team of attorneys. He is in support of this and

looks forward to a long relationship between the City, City Council and Mr. Kaszubski.

Mr. Kaszubski appreciated this opportunity. Mr. Bahorski has been a good mentor and former partner with whom he has worked closely over the last 12 years. He stated he has learned a lot about the City over those 12 years, from the Department heads to every employee he has met, and he looks forward to representing the City.

Councilwoman Koski welcomed Mr. Kaszubski, noting that his father was a councilman in the City of Troy, so she felt he has a lot of knowledge about city business.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

7. Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comments regarding this item.

Mr. Mitchell stated the Planning Commission has an important role and should be non-political and impartial. He noted 30 applications from individuals interested in serving on that Commission. He was concerned about the nominee having a political blog, and felt politics has no place on the Planning Commission.

Ms. Jazmine Early inquired as to whether English as a first language is one of the prerequisites to be on the Planning Commission, and whether the nominee was selected based on political views.

Mr. Charles Jefferson stated when he served on a Board or Commission, he recalled being told to refer any media questions to

Public Relations, but he was concerned that the nominee is part of the media through his blog. He questioned whether the Mayor interviewed any of the other 30 applicants, and if so, what questions were asked. He suggested the Planning Commission appointments should be a ballot item.

Ms. Jackie Ryan questioned whether other applicants were interviewed, and felt there should be transparency on this selection. She noted “Committee members serve at the pleasure of the Council” and thought they should also be serving “the people” as well.

Mr. Joel Thomas was concerned the candidate is being judged before he is appointed.

Mr. Geoffrey Gariepy stated he is honored by the nomination to serve on the Planning Commission. He commented that he takes full advantage of his right to tell anyone who will listen what he thinks about city politics, but assured there is not any hatred in anything he has said, and he stands by his writings. He clarified he requested a meeting with the Mayor, and it was not the other way around. He asked the Mayor about the job, and his questions were answered, but he emphasized it was not an interview.

Moved by Romano, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to appoint Geoffrey P. Gariepy to the Planning Commission to a term ending June 30, 2018,

subject to the appointee meeting the qualifications set forth in Charter §4.03 and taking the oath of office within two weeks.

Mayor Pro-Tem Romano stated when he nominates someone for a position, he will call that person and have a conversation with them, many times lasting more than 15 minutes. He acknowledged that he and Mr. Gariepy have disagreed at times, but he was confident that Mr. Gariepy “knows the pulse of the city” and is well-qualified for the position, so he is proud to nominate him.

Councilwoman Ziarko is confident Mr. Gariepy did his homework before submitting his application. She reminded this is a mayoral appointment with the confirmation of Council. She stated that, while there were 30 applications, many of those did not list Planning Commission as their first choice as a commission on which they want to serve. She stated confidence that Mr. Gariepy is broad-minded enough to be able to conduct himself properly on a commission, and will review the materials provided to make a good decision.

Councilman Skrzyaniarz stated he has been on the opposite side of Mr. Gariepy in some debates, but he felt Mr. Gariepy is very constructive and, at times, the opposite of political. He stated Mr. Gariepy is very bright and has a strong passion for the City, not politics.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated she is very comfortable with the appointment. She stated although she and Mr. Gariepy have disagreed on issues in the past,

she has become friends with him. She stated he listens, takes notes and is willing to do homework to come up with a decision that is in the best interest of everyone. She was confident that he can put his personal opinions and philosophies aside, and will be a good fit on the Planning Commission.

Councilwoman Koski agreed with her colleagues. She stated Mr. Gariepy loves the City and works hard to assist residents, so she is confident that he will do a fantastic job on the Planning Commission.

Councilman Shannon is comfortable with Mr. Gariepy's appointment to the Planning Commission. He added he has read Mr. Gariepy's blogs, which he feels reflect a lot of common sense. He thanked Mr. Gariepy for making himself available to serve in this capacity.

Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Gariepy for being here tonight. He pointed out that Mr. Gariepy spoke against an item earlier this evening that six of the seven members of Council were voting in favor of, in spite of wanting to be approved for the appointment to the Planning Commission, so he felt politics is not his main concern, but rather his desire to do what he thinks is right.

Mayor Taylor stated that is a good quality he saw in Mr. Gariepy. He stated he did not interview or call anyone other than Mr. Gariepy. He stated the people of Sterling Heights elected him to the position of Mayor, and one of the mayor's duties is to select a nominee to serve on the Planning Commission. He clarified his comment at a previous meeting that Mr. Gariepy would be "an effective communicator" and stated that had nothing to

do with English as a first language, but how he has the ability to be concise and convey his thoughts in a short time.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

8. Moved by Shannon, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to **postpone** the appointments to the Beautification Commission to the June 21, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

9. Moved by Romano, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to nominate Benjamin Ancona, Paul Jaboro and Gerald Rowe for consideration as appointees to the Planning Commission at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council Meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Romano, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to nominate Niles Omholt, David Graef and Raymond Washburn for consideration as appointees to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council Meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Schmidt, **RESOLVED**, to nominate Michael Sauger for consideration as an alternate member appointee to the Board of Ordinance Appeals I at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council Meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Romano, **RESOLVED**, to **postpone** the nominations to the Board of Ordinance Appeals I to the July 5, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Motion by Ziarko, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to nominate Michael Sauger for consideration as an appointee to the Board of Ordinance Appeals II at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Motion by Romano, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to **postpone** the nomination to the Board of Ordinance Appeals II to the June 21, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Motion by Ziarko, seconded by Romano, **RESOLVED**, to **postpone** the nomination of the alternate member of the Board of Ordinance Appeals II to the July 5, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Motion by Romano, seconded by Schmidt, **RESOLVED**, to nominate Betty Sukkar and Mark Valente, Jr. for consideration as appointees to the Board of Review at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Motion by Ziarko, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to nominate John Lamerato for consideration as an appointee to the Police and Fire Pension Board at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Motion by Romano, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to nominate Richard Weiler for consideration as an appointee to the General Employee Pension Board at the June 21, 2016 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Vanderpool responded to an earlier question regarding a land sale, and indicated proceeds go to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. He responded to another question regarding how much salt is on hand, and he reported they have 5,000 to 6,000 tons of salt on hand due to the light winter last year. He advised that the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will be holding public forums in Macomb County, including Sterling Heights, with regard to their upcoming proposal in the fall. Mr. Vanderpool stated that everything on the Van Dyke corridor should be open by July 4th, and the rest of the project is anticipated to be completed by August 1st. He hoped to have positive news to share with the City in the near future regarding the Chrysler Sterling Heights Assembly Plant, and he remains cautiously optimistic about jobs and future production at that plant.

Councilwoman Schmidt thanked everyone who was involved in the successful Memorial Day parade on the alternate route this year. She received feedback that people enjoyed it more than the regular route of going straight down Dodge Park. She expressed her thanks to the Cultural Commission and the Beautification Commission and all of the employees who were involved in making it a successful parade.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business discussed.

ADJOURN

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Romano, to adjourn the meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

MARK CARUFEL, City Clerk